



DHHS | AOA

# *You Can!* Newsletter

## *You Can!* Celebration Contest Awardees

In September, AoA encouraged *You Can!* partners to celebrate ways that older adults can be active and healthy. The celebration events not only raised awareness about the importance of making better food choices and being more physically active, but also showed that leading a healthier lifestyle can be fun.

During any seven-day period in September, 61 *You Can!* partners created *You Can!* Celebration activities. During the activities participants made a pledge and engaged in healthier lifestyle activities.

As part of the celebration, AoA hosted a *You Can!* Celebration contest to reward outstanding celebratory activities. AoA understands that planning events can be a lot of work and wanted to recognize partners who made an extra effort to develop inventive, fun programs for their older adults. Partners who signed up to participate in the celebration and completed a form about their celebration achievements were eligible to win in one of five categories:

- Best overall integration of physical activity and nutrition education;
- Most innovative physical activity entry;
- Most innovative nutrition education entry;
- Most collaborative effort; and
- Most innovative way to increase walking.

Each winner was awarded \$500 from the category sponsor. Honorable mentions for each category received a plaque. All partners that participated in the contest received a certificate. Award sponsors participated in the *You Can!* Celebration as partners in the *You Can!* campaign.

In addition to hosting the official *You Can!* Celebration contest, AoA decided to award randomly selected *You Can!* partnering organizations with t-shirts and pedometers as a “Thank you” for all of their hard work. Thirty organizations were each sent 50 *You Can!* pedometers and five organizations received a supply of *You Can!* t-shirts.



Top Awardee, Steilacoom's basketball team, the Pyramids

## The You Can! Celebration contest awardees and award sponsors

### Best overall integration of physical activity and nutrition education



An Honorable Mention went to New York City Department for the Aging. Their You Can! Celebration included a Senior Stroll.

Sponsors: American Dietetic Association Foundation

In addition to the cash award, Administration on Aging provided this awardee with travel and per diem to the 3rd National Prevention Summit in Washington, DC, which took place October 24-25

**Top Awardee:** Steilacoom Community Center, Steilacoom, Steilacoom, Washington

Steilacoom developed an intergenerational celebratory program with 85 participants. As part of the celebration they conducted a mini-health fair and a food group luncheon. Also, they created a food group basketball team aptly named, the Pyramids. The basketball team emphasized the important interrelationship between Movement and Nutrition. Building on the You Can! credo, the participants completed a personal, quality of life goal. Seniors learned the importance of moderation, team work, and the meaning of “It’s Never Too Late!” The program received support from the Town of Steilacoom, Health Department, Catholic Community Services, Volunteers, and our Before/After school program.

**Honorable Mention:** Southern Illinois Health Care, Carbondale, Illinois

One hundred and fifty-nine seniors participated in Southern Illinois Health Care’s You Can! Celebration programs. Five agencies partnered to implement the celebratory program. During their kick-off picnic, attendees enjoyed healthy food and heard ideas for how to add fruits and vegetables to their diets. Also, each attendee was given a cookbook. Activities included making fat free ice cream in a bag, playing bocce ball & partaking in a scavenger hunt. Bocce ball and scavenger hunt winners received a pedometer. Over the week long celebration, participants ate 400 servings of fruits and veggies and took part in PACE exercise, stretching and balance testing.

### Most innovative physical activity entry

Sponsor: International Council on Active Aging

**Top awardee:** New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Trenton, New Jersey

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services promoted its *Live Long, Live Well* walking program, along with other walking and nutrition events, for its YouCan! Celebration. There were nine partner-sponsored walking events during which 8,439 pieces of information (including walking logs, community packets, and nutrition information) were distributed. At one event, the Bergen County Executive and Gubernatorial Contenders encouraged over 2,300 seniors to stay healthy by keeping physically fit and eating nutritious

*“It’s Never Too Late!”—Steilacoom Community Center*

foods. Overall, NJ older adults have logged in a total of 316,600 miles since starting the *Live Long, Live Well* program and an additional 66,600 miles were logged in for the month of September.

**Honorable mention:** Erie Center on Health and Aging, Erie, Pennsylvania

The Erie Center on Health & Aging Breakfast Bunch walking group for adults age 50 and over participated in the *You Can!* Celebration. Their kick-off event included two presentations, one on healthy eating choices and the other on the importance of physical activity. After the kick-off, 30 Breakfast Bunch walkers were challenged to complete a chart listing their daily amount of fruits and vegetables and were given *You Can!* step counters and asked to record their daily number of steps for the week. At the end of the celebration, there was a drawing for the 15 participants who turned in their completed nutrition and physical activity charts. The two winners received fruit baskets valued at \$20.00 each.

### Most innovative nutrition education entry

Sponsor: American Dietetic Association Foundation

**Top Awardee:** Southern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging, Rochester, Minnesota

Southeastern Minnesota had *You Can!* Celebrations at five nutrition sites in four counties. During the celebration, SM-AAA collaborated with 12 partners to enroll 123 seniors in the *Eat Better & Move More* program and chair exercise classes. Participants attended a talk by a physician or nurse about the link between chronic diseases and lifestyle choices, as well as 18 other health education, exercise, and nutrition sessions. They received screenings for blood pressure, resting heart rate, blood sugar, cholesterol, weight, weight, waist size, times up and go, depression, and sleep patterns. Their daily steps, nutrition habits, and physical activity levels were also recorded. In order to maintain motivation, seniors shared pictures of their reasons to eat better and move more.



Top Awardee: Western Alabama

**Honorable mention:** Nuckolls County Senior Services, Superior, Nebraska

As part of Nuckolls County Senior Services' *You Can!* Celebration, 16 seniors plus staff participated in a week long walk during which everyone recorded their number of steps. The person who walked the most steps received free meals at the Vestey Center Senior Center. In addition to the step challenge, NCSS designated a special day of exercise. In order to celebrate healthy eating, they accepted recipes for a healthy cookbook. As a grand finale to the celebration, they took a field trip to Price's Produce and Pumpkin Patch to learn about all the veggies and fruits grown there and walked around the fields.

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*A special thank you  
to the award  
sponsors: AARP, the  
American Dietetic  
Association  
Foundation, the  
International  
Council on Active  
Aging, and the  
National Association  
of Area Agencies on  
Aging!*

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## Most collaborative effort

Sponsor: National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

**Top Awardee:** Buffalo Trace Area Development District, Maysville, Kentucky

The Buffalo Trace Area Development District *You Can!* Celebration week was a collaborative effort including 17 businesses in all five counties. The *You Can!* Celebration kicked off with a picnic at the YMCA that 75 seniors attended. Picnic activities included chair volleyball, yoga, games, lunch, and a speaker on healthy lifestyles with exercise and nutrition. Seniors received a free pedometer as motivation to participate in a step challenge. As a result, they walked over 553,500 steps in a week. The winner of the step challenge received a gift from local partners. The Buffalo Trace Area Development District had more than 250 seniors participated in the *You Can!* project.

**Honorable Mention:** Hercules Senior Center, Hercules, California

Hercules Senior Center partnered with Contra Costa Senior Nutrition Program, Hercules/Rodeo Fire Depart., and Contra Costa College for their *You Can!* Celebration, which they called “Step into a Healthier Way of Life.” They kicked-off their celebration with a dance/luncheon. Before the dance, the Hercules and Rodeo fire Department took everyone’s blood pressure. Contra Costa County Nutrition Program provided information on eating more fruits and vegetables and had an apple tasting contest to find and name the sweetest apple. During the celebration week they had 199 participants in the Nutrition Program. The program grew by word of mouth. Not only did the number of participants increase, but also many different groups partnered to implement the *You Can!* Program.

## Most innovative way to increase walking

Sponsor: AARP

**Top Awardee:** Western Alabama Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging, Northport, Alabama

West Alabama celebrated *You Can!* Steps to Healthier Aging with four events. During the events seniors met at different parks throughout the seven-county region to walk, dance, sing, eat and socialize with other seniors. Each senior received a registration bag with nutritional information, water bottles, and pedometers. Healthy lunches were provided at each event. The Alabama Cooperative Extension service spoke on healthier eating habits. Also, home health care agencies and other medical professionals took blood pressure before, during and after the event. During the walking portion of the event, seniors stopped at the halfway point to receive blood pressure checks, a bottle of cold water and to rest. During the week, West Alabama seniors collectively walked 1,145 miles and consumed 2,249 fruits and 2,379 vegetables.

**Honorable Mention:** New York City Department for the Aging, New York, New York

Sixteen hundred seniors from all parts of New York City participated in the Senior Stroll held in Staten Island. All participants received pedometers so they could track how far they walked that day. Pertinent health materials on Medicare Part D, nutrition, exercise, and heart tips were distributed. The top five Big Apple Walking Clubs with the most accrued steps received plaques from the Commissioner. The Senior Stroll ended with music, dancing and visits to health education kiosks that highlighted the benefits and joys of physical activity and good health.

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Thank you to the 61 *You Can!* partners who participated in the celebration contest. AoA sponsors the *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign but depends on its partners to help spread the word among older Americans about the importance of making wise food choices and increasing physical activity. Your work transforms the “*You Can!*” message from a concept to reality.